

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 EB-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /073 W

----- 127013

R 221756Z JAN 75

FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8157

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 263

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 0597

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EEC, PFOR, XF

SUBJECT: EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE

REF: A) DUBLIN 131 B) ROME 801

1. SUMMARY. WELLENSTEIN TELLS US THAT THE LATEST VISIT TO CAIRO BY COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES (REFTELS) CHANGED NOTHING FUNDAMENTALLY. THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE REMAINS BLOCKED BY THE PLO ISSUE. NEVERTHELESS THE ARAB SIDE MADE CLEAR ITS CONTINUED INTEREST IN SUBSTANTIVE ECONOMIC COOPERATION WHEN AND IF THE PLO PROBLEM IS OVERCOME. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING DISCUSSION WITH MISSION OFFICERS ON JANUARY 22, EC COMMISSION DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS WELLENSTEIN COMMENTED

ON THE RECENT VISIT TO CAIRO BY IRISH FOREIGN OFFICE DUPUTY SECRETARY KENNAN. (KENNAN WAS ACCOMPANIED BY EC COMMISSION DUPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL MEYER). WELLENSTEIN STATED THAT THE VISIT BY KENNAN AND
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MEYER HAD BEEN UNDERTAKEN AS A "TOKEN" INDIACATION THAT THE

COMMUNITY HAS NOT REPEAT NOT SEVERED CONTACT WITH THE ARABS AND ALSO AS A MEANS OF BRINGING THE IRISH EC PRESIDENCY INTO THE DISCUSSIONS. THE TRIP WAS THEREFORE BILLED AS A COURTESY CALL BY KENNAN ON RIAD OF THE ARAB LEAGUE AND THE LEBANESE AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO, WHO IS THE LEAGUE'S CURRENT CHAIRMAN.

3. WELLENSTEIN'S VIEW IS THAT NOTHING FUNDAMENTALLY NEW DEVELOPED FROM THE VISIT AND THE DIALOGUE REMAINS "BLOCKED". THE ARAB INTERLOCUTORS, HOWEVER, DID ACKNOWLEDGE THE VISIT AS AN INDICATION OF THE EC'S DESIRE FOR CONTINUING CONTACTS. WELLENSTEIN SAID THAT RIAD AND THE LEBANESE AMBASSADOR HAD REITERATED THAT INCLUSION OF THE PLO IN THE DIALOGUE IS AN "ABSOLUTE MUST," AND KENNAN RESPONDED THAT THE EC IS UNABLE TO ACCEPT THIS STIPULATION.

4. WELLENSTEIN SAID HE THOUGHT THERE WAS, NEVERTHELESS, ONE INTERESTING TWIST IN THE DISCUSSION: WHEREAS IN THE PAST THE ARABS EXPLICITLY STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL ISSUES IN THE DIALOGUE, ON THIS OCCASION THEY HAD PLACED PRIMARY EMPHASIS ON ECONOMIC ISSUES (ALTHOUGH NOT REPEAT NOT EXCLUDING THAT THE DIALOGUE WOULD HAVE "POLITICAL NUANCES"). WELLENSTEIN SAID HE WOULD NOT EXAGGERATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS PRESENTATIONAL CHANGE BUT FOUND IT AN INTERESTING BIT OF ATMOSPHERE. WELLENSTEIN ALSO SAID THAT THE ARABS SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT NOTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO DISTURB EFFORTS TO PROMOTE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WELLENSTEIN NOTED THAT KENNAN'S INTERLOCUTORS WERE AMONG THE MOST MODERATE ELEMENTS IN THE ARAB WORLD AND ALSO CLEARLY HAVE AN INSTITUTIONAL INTEREST IN PROMOTING THE ARAB LEAGUE.

5. WELLENSTEIN COMMENTED FURTHER THAT KENNAN HAD TOLD THE ARABS THAT, ALTHOUGH IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE NOW TO BEGIN THE EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE, THE EC WOULD CONTINUE ITS OWN PREPARATIONS. HE SUGGESTED THAT EC EXPERTS MIGHT FORWARD TO THE ARABS DRAFT PAPERS ON SUBJECTS SUCH AS ECONOMIC COOPERATION; RIAD INDICATED HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO ACCEPT THEM. WELLENSTEIN ADDED THAT IT WAS NOT CERTAIN WHETHER THE EC PAPER WOULD GO ANY FURTHER THAN RIAD, HOWEVER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC COOPERATION, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ECBRU00597
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750024-0979
From: EC BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750131/aaaabbcm.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 DUBLIN 131, 75 ROME 801
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 APR 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <10 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE
TAGS: PFOR, XF, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006